



The United Church Maffra Congregation

MONTHLY - NEWS

September 2026

MINISTERS LETTER

Dear Friends in Maffra United Church,
September has arrived, and spring is not far behind. We expect it every year, don't we. Winter loosens its grip, the days grow longer, and new life pushes up through the cold ground. It feels so natural and so safe, like a promise God keeps again and again without fail. But this year, something has made me pause on that promise. In the last days of August, a terrible flood struck Nepal and Tibet. High in the Himalayas, part of the Langtang Lirung glacier broke away and crashed down the mountainside. It turned into a wall of rock, ice, and water that swept through river valleys below. Hundreds of people have died, and many more are still missing. Whole villages were gone in minutes.

That glacier had rested on that mountain for thousands and thousands of years. None of us thought something so old and so solid could simply give way. Scientists studying the disaster now believe that our warming climate likely weakened the ice and helped trigger its collapse. That is hard news to sit with. It tells us that even the deep, slow rhythms of creation, the ones we have always trusted, are being disturbed by the way we live.

Right at the start of the Bible, God gives us a clear job. In Genesis 2:15, God places the first humans in the garden "to work it and take care of it." That phrase, to take care, means something like to guard and to serve. It is the same tender care a shepherd gives to sheep. We were never meant to be owners of this earth. We were made to be its carers, its stewards, holding it gently on behalf of the God who made it.

Spring will still come to Maffra this September, and for that we can be truly grateful. But gratitude and responsibility go hand in hand. If we love the Creator, it follows that we should love and tend the creation too. That care does not need to be grand. It can be as simple as switching off a light, wasting less food, or having an honest



chat with a neighbour about how we might live a little more gently on this earth.

This month, I'd like to invite us to hold the people of Nepal and Tibet in our prayers, and to spend a quiet moment giving thanks for the ground beneath our feet and the seasons that still turn for us. If you'd like to talk more about any of this, or about anything at all, my door is always open over a cuppa.

Blessings

Your minister, Rev. Paul Ryu

Friendship Group

Friendship Group to meet on the 10th September at 1.30pm.

Bring along your stamps for the Sammy Stamp Collection. See you all there. Dot.



Quilt Group

Will meet on 10th and 24th September

10-3

Enquiries to Jude 0412 778707

Faithful Futures Roadshow

As outlined in the last Monthly News, **the Faithful Futures Roadshow is coming to**

Maffra on Saturday October 10th. The workshop will be held in the Maffra Uniting Church supper room. It will start at 10.00 am and finish at 2.30 pm. Please bring your own lunch. Snacks, tea and coffee will be provided.

It will be a relaxed gathering designed to bring the Faithful Futures Project to life through conversation and participation.

Why come along?

- Hear about the Faithful Futures project, with time for your questions
- Share your own experience and ideas in a World Café conversation
- Take part in imagining together what our Presbytery could look like in 5 to 10 years
- Be heard: everything gathered on the day is collated, themed, and shared back across the Presbytery, with real next steps

Each session is invitational and open to everyone in Gippsland Presbytery - you don't need any background in strategy or governance to take part, just a willingness to talk and listen.

The workshops will take us through a range of activities to uncover the stories of what God is already doing with the church, and to explore together some questions which might help us discover even more possibilities.

Please register your intention to come at <https://events.humanitix.com/faithful-futures-gippsland-presbytery>

Or get in touch with sec.ucagipps@gmail.com 0408 499 046 to register.

Thank you,

The Gippsland Faithful Futures Roadshow Team

Faithful Futures

Our Church Gardens'

- Initial progress and future possibilities

The start: In July, a brush cutter was used to cut off all the grass, weeds, perennials and some bushes, at ground level for quite a large part of the corner garden. These weeds, perennials, bulbs etc will grow again quickly and are gradually being dug out. By next Sunday there will be free bulbs from the garden for anyone who would like them.

Planting was started once the decision to resurrect the garden was made, since we have had quite a bit of rain recently and the ground was quite soft. Actually, for my first day, I arrived with my mattock and shovel but after two swings of the mattock, I realised that the Maffra soil is a lot easier to dig than the soil I have been used to at home for the last 40 years, so I just dug wide holes for the rest of the plants.



It was a handy time to get started before the rain stops and the heat starts for summer.

Over time the plan is to gradually remove all the non-native, or non-native-like, plants and plant back with natives as was the original intention for the garden. The complete process will take a while but some quick growing wattles, other plants from home and some bought in the meantime, have been planted, to give the garden a bit more substance while waiting for other permanent natives to grow.



The plan is to use bird and insect attracting plants as well as ones that will be useful for fresh flowers in the church at various times. There will be low, medium and higher story plants so that birds will be comfortable nesting there. According to Birdlife Australia, many gardens have upper and lower story plants but not the middle story which is detrimental for some nesting birds. The corner and back garden at the church have enough room for all three, which is good. There may even be a bird bath down the track.

I was thinking that it would be good to have a proper delineation between the corner garden bed and the lawn, as well as around the garden beneath the sign, by using something robust like corten edging as a long-term solution. It would be a good barrier to stop the grass growing under it from the lawn to the garden bed and the mowers and whipper snippers can mow/snip/cut against it and it won't be adversely affected.

The best planting time for natives is April /May when a greater number of the more expensive natives/native-like plants will be purchased and planted. At that time, we could possibly have congregation members, that wish to, be able to sponsor a plant

of their choice within the above specifications, and I will then order/buy them and plant them, perhaps with an acknowledgement plan which is [visible to](#) all. I have already had a donation of \$100 to buy 5 grevilleas which has been a great boost to the variety of bird and butterfly attracting plants for our garden. The plants were purchased and planted within 24 hours of receipt of the money. Thank you very much.

I am delighted to be able to resurrect this native garden as was the congregation's intent and plan from many years ago, with some very established plants still remaining, to provide an attractive and interesting garden for our church, congregation and community; and as has been positively commented on by previous Presbytery Ministers.



If you have any comments or other ideas for our garden, just let me know.

Thanks,
Jeanette



UnitingWorld Launches Nepal Emergency Appeal

Flash floods struck the Nepal–Tibet border region on 26 August 2026, killing more than 460 people, with 1,400 still missing.

Donations received through UnitingWorld will be directed to the work of United Mission to Nepal (UNM), to provide:

- Immediate relief: Working in the Dhading and Nuwakot Districts, United Mission to Nepal are supporting approximately 1,000 affected families with essential food and non-food relief items, based on needs identified through rapid assessment.
- Response and recovery: as communities move into recovery, they will focus on education, including rebuilding damaged schools and establishing temporary learning centres, so that children can resume their education as soon as possible. The scale and scope of this recovery work will depend on the needs identified and the funding available.

You can help bring immediate aid and long-term support for people affected by the flash floods in Nepal.



To Donate:

Go to the Uniting World website *or call 1800 998 122 (9am – 5pm)*

Or put your donation in an envelope marked “Nepal” and place in the offering.

Rosters

ELDERS	
September October	Lois Ramsey Jude Walker
DOOR STEWARDS	
6 September 13 & 20 September 27 September & 4 October	Eleanor Delaney & volunteer Dot Berryman & Elaine Clements Isa Taylor & Sue Poynton
BIBLE READER	
6 September 13 September 20 & 27 September 4 October	Jude Walker Isa Taylor Kathy Malcolm Lois Ramsey
LAWNS	
7 September 21 September 5 October	Duncan & Kathy Malcolm Geoff Little & Volunteer Frazer & Sue Burnett
FLOWERS	
September 4 & 11 October	Vacant Dot Berryman

WORSHIP SERVICES:

13 September	Margaret Warnock
27 September	Peter Morris